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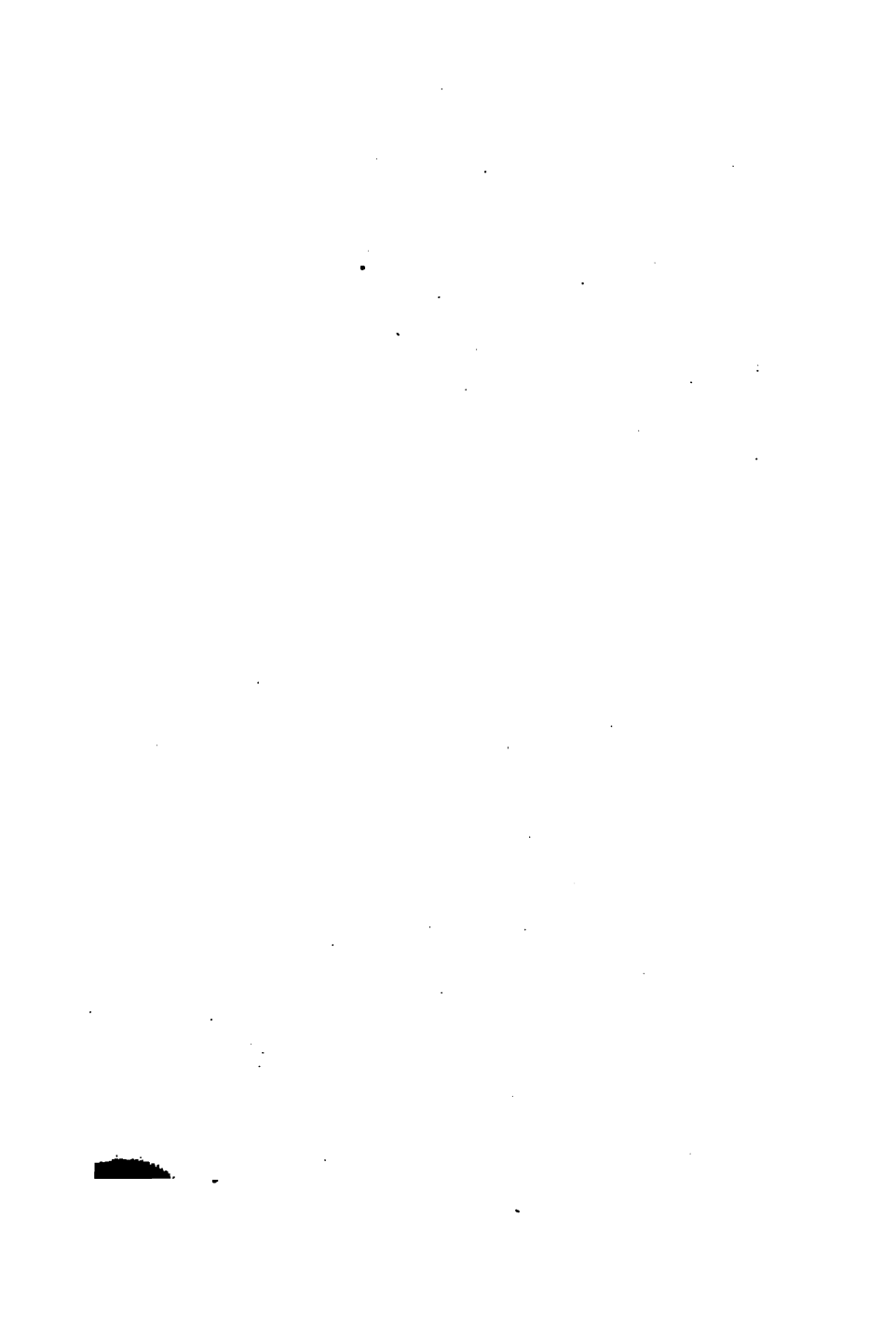


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ZEY
Pa. H. R.



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS.

DR. PARKER preaches in the City Temple, Holborn Viaduct, London, on Sundays at Eleven a.m. and Seven p.m., and also on *Thursday* mornings at Twelve o'clock.

The Very Rev. Dr. VAUGHAN, Master of the Temple and Dean of Llandaff, says :—" I have been at the Thursday mid-day service, and was immensely struck by the scene and by the sermon."

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INGERSOLL ANSWERED.

AN EXAMINATION OF HIS DISCOURSE

ENTITLED

"WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?"

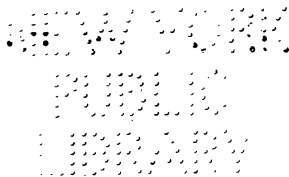
BY

JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.,

MINISTER OF THE CITY TEMPLE, HOLBORN VIADUCT, LONDON;

AUTHOR OF "ECCE DEUS," "THE PARACLETE," "THE INNER LIFE OF CHRIST,"

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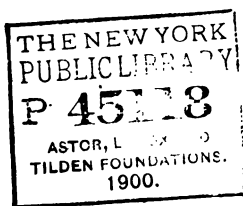


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Dr. PARKER'S Sermons preached in the
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MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO

A. VACHER, Esq.,

WHO, BY THE DEEP INTEREST HE HAS TAKEN BOTH IN THE

LECTURE AND THE REPLY, HAS SHOWN THE

CANDOUR OF MIND

WHICH IS ESSENTIAL TO AN INDEPENDENT AND SUCCESSFUL

INQUIRY INTO THE BEARINGS OF

CONTROVERTED QUESTIONS.

PERSONAL.

SINCE writing my Reply I have perused a sketch of one of Colonel Ingersoll's Receptions or "At-homes," from which I have learned a little of the more private life of the lecturer. The reporter says, near the conclusion of his sketch, "If I had never heard anything of Colonel Ingersoll's views, I should say I was in the house of the most perfect Christian that ever lived." After a statement of this kind one is anxious to go a little into particulars, and this the writer frankly enables us to do. For example: "When the servant opens the front door and the callers enter the large front hall, if the Colonel and his wife are near the door they come out into the hall at once, greeting the visitors with the heartiest kind of a welcome, making them feel that the family would not have been quite satisfied without their presence." It is satisfactory to learn that the visitors go in by "the front door." That has long been a Christian habit, and, indeed, is looked upon as a commonplace in Christian conduct. If any visitors came to the back door, or tried to clamber in by one of the windows, the action would be accounted suspicious, though it might have about it the piquant savour of "absolute intellectual freedom." The reporter then sketches the pleasant house, its pictures and books and statues, and then he adds, "the Colonel's course may be tracked by the shouts

of laughter which he always inspires." This is not unchristian, provided always that the laughter is really inspired. Inspired laughter must be a kind of religious exercise. At Chicago the Colonel excited "laughter," "renewed laughter," and "roars of laughter;" and in his own house his track is known by "the shouts of laughter which he inspires." Truly, "he makes a fine jingle wherever he goes." Now comes a nice little episode: "About half-past ten the Colonel will disappear for a few moments, and then the dining-room doors will be thrown open and the guests invited to enter. The large dining-table in the centre of the room is loaded with the rare delicacies which go to make up a dainty supper. At one end is the large punch-bowl, brimming with delicious punch, made by him during his few moments' absence from the parlours. The Colonel himself presides at the bowl, carefully watching to see if his guests are well served. The crowd always gathers at this end of the room near him, anxious to hear his bright, witty remarks." Very probably, a man who commands both "delicious punch" and "witty remarks" is likely to be popular wherever he may place himself. It is very good of the reporter to say that the people gather around the Colonel for the sake of the bright and witty remarks, and to ignore the attractiveness of the delicious punch. One is glad that it is wit that brings the people, for it would not be so in England—at least, probably not. Anyway, the punch would be a powerful rival. But in America on a Sunday evening, in the house of a minister of freethought, the people gather around the "witty remarks," and if the delicious punch happens to be there, how can they help it?—J. P.

INGERSOLL ANSWERED.

[The edition of Colonel Ingersoll's lecture quoted in this answer is called the "Bijou Edition." It was issued in England by Mr. Sugden. The pages refer to that edition. I had not seen any other edition until my reply was practically finished.]

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

UNDER this title a remarkable lecture has been delivered in America by Colonel Robert G. INGERSOLL, who is announced as a minister of the Gospel of Freethought. About the lecturer I know nothing more than he has told me himself in his eloquent lecture. I judge him to be a man of rare power as a speaker, and probably one of those rhetoricians who would take any cut to a climax, and sacrifice whatever stood in the way of immediate impression and effect. He appears from this lecture to be a man who is determined to secure the laughter and applause of his hearers at all costs. The lecture reads as if reported, and is very largely charged with such expressions as "laughter and applause," and "renewed laughter." On almost every page these expressions occur, and others stronger still, such as "loud applause," "loud applause and laughter," "loud laughter," "roars of laughter," and the like. When you know that the subject was, "What must I do to be saved?" and when I tell you that in twenty-four pages you find twenty-seven notes of "laughter," "loud laughter," and "roars of laughter," and when the lecturer himself acknowledges, as he does on page 17, that

"for thousands of years the world has been asking that question, What shall we do to be saved?" you will see that either the subject cannot have been treated with intellectual dignity or that the audience must have been of the basest moral type. "Laughter," "loud laughter," "renewed laughter," "roars of laughter," are hardly the remarks which would occur as appropriate interruptions of a lecture upon a solemn theme, delivered by an earnest man, and listened to by a thoughtful assembly. The lecturer himself allows that for thousands of years the world has been asking, "What shall we do to be saved?" The question, therefore, is older than Christianity itself. It is an inquiry which, Mr. Ingersoll says, has excited the interest of the world "for thousands of years," and yet he treats it in a manner which elicited "laughter," "loud laughter," "renewed laughter," and "roars of laughter," and by so much he disqualified himself in my opinion for attempting to answer so solemn an inquiry. He would not have dared to answer a local question with such mocking flippancy. If the question had been, What shall we do to rid the city of the deadly plague of cholera? he dared not have replied in a manner which evoked "laughter," "loud laughter," "renewed laughter," and "roars of laughter," or if he had done so he would have been hooted from the platform which he had abused and disgraced. But when he undertakes to answer a question which he admits has been asked by the world "for thousands of years," he plays off little witticisms, and perpetrates little jokes, and answers the world's great question with such jocular raillery as might become the tap-room of a tavern or the sawdust ring of a bankrupt circus. If he had been called in as a medical adviser, and asked what could be done to save the life of your little child, and if he had answered in a manner which called forth "laughter," "loud laughter," "renewed laughter," and "roars of laughter," so that *the laughter* infected the whole street and spread to the adjoin-

ing region, you would have regarded him as the cruellest of mockers, and have expelled him from the house he had defiled. But when he rises to answer a question which the world has been asking "for thousands of years," he answers it amid "laughter," "loud laughter," "renewed laughter," and "roars of laughter." The significance of this fact must not escape notice. Great questions should be considered in a spirit worthy of their gravity. The spirit is not the least qualification of a good guide in the crises of life. Clowns and mockers are never consulted on great occasions. The plague-stricken man does not consult them; the soldier on the eve of battle does not call them to counsel; the statesman face to face with an imminent danger does not invite their untimely merriment; and for myself, I must positively decline the aid of any man who answers the gravest questions of my heart with gibes and sneers, with puns and quirks, and seeks to turn my agony into an hypocrisy, and my sin into an occasion of displaying his own powers of ridicule. Believe me, young men, he is not necessarily your wisest guide who can make you laugh most uproariously, and find fun for you amid the most strenuous inquiries of the mind. It will, therefore, always subtract from the weight of the discourse before me that it attempted to discuss the question which the whole world has been asking "for thousands of years," in a tone which was answered by "laughter," "loud laughter," "renewed laughter," and "roars of laughter"—laughter out of place, answering wit out of season. Better for the lecturer had he said with Cowper:—

" But if unhappily I dream,
And prove too weak for so divine a theme,
Let charity forgive me a mistake
Which zeal, not vanity, has chanced to make,
And spare the speaker for the subject's sake."

Coming now to the lecture itself, the lecturer says: "I am in

favour of absolute freedom of thought," and again he says: "There can be no danger in the exercise of absolute freedom of thought." Now we know as a matter of simple fact that "absolute freedom of thought" is an impossibility. In what practical region of life have we absolute freedom of thought? Is every man absolutely free to say how many *two and two* make? Is every man absolutely free to interpret *the law of the land* just as he pleases? Is a citizen of the United States absolutely free to commit *high treason* against the spirit of the Union? Is every man in the States absolutely free to call Mr. Ingersoll a thief, and undermine his social credit and standing? If not, where is the *absoluteness* of the freedom? Is not society itself based upon concession? But concession is opposed to absoluteness, and therefore absoluteness is impossible in society. But it is in *religion* that this absoluteness of freedom is claimed. But why in religion alone? If good in religion, why not in arithmetic? Why not in morality? Why not in politics? You bind a man in every *other* department of thought and action, and yet would give him absolute liberty in religious inquiry and decision. I must ask what is meant by the term "religion" in this controversy? If you mean a set of fickle opinions upon totally indifferent subjects, you may possibly claim absolute freedom of thought. A man may, for example, claim absolute liberty of opinion as to whether it is at this moment raining in another planet, or as to the particular flowers which will be most appreciated on this earth in ten thousand years from a given date. Why may he have absolute intellectual freedom on *such* subjects? Simply because they are pointless and worthless. They have no practical bearing. They can never touch life or action at any important or influential point. But this is not the definition of religion as I understand and teach it. It is certainly not a true definition of the *Christian* religion. Christianity is morality. Christian *thought* leads to

Christian *action*. Christian belief is not a merely *speculative* exercise; it is the spring of conduct, it is the inspiration of judgment and practice, it is the dynamic force by which the whole mechanism of life is moved. Why allow absolute freedom of *thought* if you do not allow absolute freedom of *action*? Why be absolute on one side only? If absoluteness be confined to thought, it is only partial absoluteness, and partial absoluteness is a contradiction in terms. But the fact that absolute freedom of *action* cannot be tolerated in civilised society should suggest the impossibility of having absolute freedom of *thought* in any practical region of the mind. To give man absolute freedom of thought and to give him only partial freedom of action, is really to mock him. It is to say to him, Think what you like, but keep your thought to yourself, for if you attempt to embody it you may be taken up as a traitor, you may be condemned as a thief, you may be hanged as a felon. Where a subject is merely and only *speculative*, as, for example, what kind of weather is being at this moment experienced in some planet yet undiscovered, we may enjoy and permit absolute intellectual freedom; but where thought is the inner aspect of morality, where conviction becomes the necessity of action, and where the action itself is jealously watched by every instinct of honour and every precept of law, it should at least suggest that the *harmfulness* of the action should limit the absolute *freedom* of the thought. When a man allows me to *think* what I like, but limits me as to my *expression*, he takes away with one hand what he gives with the other. The lecturer might allow me to *think* him a thief, but he would justly protest against my being allowed to *call* him one. Where, then, is absoluteness of freedom? There is no such thing. Its advocates themselves would never permit it. They are just as sensitive as everybody else about the practical application of such liberty, and it is only when they speak of religion that they allow themselves to become

the victims of a sophism which is not tolerated in any region or walk of practical conduct.

Suppose I should say, "Mr. Ingersoll, I *think* you are a thief; will you allow me to *say* so in the papers to-morrow morning?" The reply would probably be, "You may *think* what you like, but take care what you *publish*." Where, then, is absolute liberty? What is the use of having liberty to *think* if I have not corresponding liberty to *act*? I may *take* the liberty to think, and nobody can hinder me from doing so; but the mere fact that nobody can *hinder* me does not give me the *right* of taking. Mark the distinction, if you please. Right is not measurable by power. You say you take the liberty to think what you like. True; but that proves nothing to the point. A man should exercise self-control even in the subtle and spiritual act of thinking, for thinking is itself an *action* and should be under the direction of *will*. I have not absolute freedom of thought respecting your moral character. I lay great stress upon this point, because it seems to be loosely considered that *thought* and *action* are two unrelated expressions of life, whereas I hold them to be *identical*. If a thought never came out of the most secret recesses of the mind we should still limit ourselves in the *thinking* of it. Self-control does not begin upon the vulgar *deed*, it begins upon the subtle and unuttered thought. I have the right of inquiry and the right of judgment, but these rights are limited by the law of responsibility. I must think according to the facts. I am limited by those facts if I am an honourable man. The facts literally bind me with a kind of intellectual bondage. I *am* only free within *limits*. The limits may, indeed, be wide or narrow, but they are limits still. The bird in the air has wider limits than the bird in the cage, yet the firmament itself is only a cage enlarged, and in relation to infinity it is smaller than the point of a pin. Gravitation is bondage. So absolute freedom

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is an absolute fiction, because it is an absolute impossibility. Still, observe with most vigilant care exactly where it is that the so-called freethinker would allow you absolute intellectual freedom. He is very gracious in the religious region. He will not allow you absolute freedom in *social* thought; he will limit your freedom of criticism upon his own *character*; he will draw a line around your thinking respecting his property, his profession, and his family, but he compounds for these careful limitations by allowing you to tear the Scriptures to tatters, to assail the altar of religion, and to insult the name of God. Besides, what is the use of granting me absolute freedom of *thought*, if you cannot grant me absolute immunity from the consequences of mistaken thinking? You are liberal at the one end of this arrangement and powerless at the other. As a mere matter of fact men have to endure penalty even for *wrong thinking*. If a man honestly thought that the train started at noonday, when in reality it started at midnight, his honesty would not take him far on his journey. If a man honestly mistook a foe for a friend, his absolute intellectual freedom will not do much for him in the event of injury or loss. As a matter of fact, thoughts are attended by *consequences*, and unless you can guarantee me at the one end you have no right to loosen my sense of responsibility at the other. The lecturer has addressed himself to this point, for on p. 44 he says: "Why, they say to me, suppose all this should turn out to be true, and you should come to the day of judgment and find all this to be true. What would you do then? I would walk up like a man, and say, I was mistaken." This is the lecturer's short and easy method. It is, however, a method which is too small to meet the necessity of society. It is not allowed amongst our social customs. The law of *libel* would not be satisfied by it. We say that vindication is not enough, it must be followed by compensation. The law of *conspiracy* would not be satisfied by it.

The laws relating to covenants and settlements would not be satisfied by it. The mere acknowledgment of mistake amounts to nothing in any practical sphere of life. If you found another man's hand in your pocket, it would not be enough for him to say he was mistaken, even though he "walked up like a man" to make the flippant speech. His walking up like a man would not produce any sublime effect upon you. If he crouched like a dog you might pity him, but if he walked up like a man you would be the severer in your judgment and demand. The lecturer would say he "was mistaken." And pray what does that amount to? Amid "laughter," "loud laughter," "renewed laughter," and "roars of laughter," he mocked some things which other men counted sacred; mocked the doctrine of human depravity, mocked the authority of the Scriptures. Some who heard him threw off early restraints, gave up religious habits, entered with eager passion into delights which before they had accounted as forbidden, displaced reverence by flippancy, brought up their children in irreligiousness, and in the long run Mr. Ingersoll, who was the occasion, if not the cause of this unhappy change, will "walk up like a man and say he was mistaken." But what will his deluded victims do? When *he* has "walked up like a man," where will *they* be? It may suit a person who is conscious of intellectual power, and who is so familiar with all the mysteries and secrecies of possible life as to turn them into occasions of pleasantry, to "walk up like a man," amid the final scrutiny and arbitrament of time, and to thrill the universe with the frank confession of a personal mistake of speculative thinking; but what are common men to do—the ignorant, the timid, the debauched, and the ineloquent? What of those who have no theatrical gifts or dramatic aspirations? What of those who went farther than the lecturer ever intended them to go, and turned his intellectual liberty into moral licence? Men should forecast such grave possibilities

before—amid “laughter,” “loud laughter,” “renewed laughter,” and “roars of laughter”—they mock the question which “the world has asked for thousands of years,” and to which they have returned but an incomplete, and, at best, a conjectural reply.

But the lecturer thinks his ground is good when he puts his next point. He says (p. 10): “Can I commit a sin against God by thinking? If God did not intend I should think, why did He give me a ‘thinker’?” Probably a more childish inquiry was never made by a full-grown man. He also says: “Do not imagine that there is any being who could give to his children the holy torch of reason, and then damn them for following where the holy light led.” Now in both these expressions it is quietly assumed that reason, or the thinking faculty, is now exactly what it was when it was given to mankind. There are other men who deny this, and confirm their denial by consciousness and observation. They contend that the reasoning faculty has been depraved. They assert that it went down in the general Fall. But I will not argue the question on theological grounds, but on grounds which are undisputed. My contention is, that the fact of man having a “thinker” does not justify the extreme inference which the lecturer drew from it; the *fact* is right, but the *inference* is wrong. The lecturer’s reasoning is, God gave me a “thinker,” therefore He intended me to think. Certainly. But He did not intend you to *abuse* the power of thought. God gave you feet, but He did not mean you to walk over a precipice. God meant you to help yourself or He would never have given you *hands*. Truly. But He did not mean you to help yourself to poison. There is a right use of power, and there is a wrong use. You give a child a spoon with which to eat his dinner, but you do not mean the child to choke himself with the spoon. You give your child money, but not to spend in harmful ways. The greater the gift,

with greater care must it be used. Besides, we ourselves *limit* the power of practical thinking in all the ways already pointed out. We warn men to beware of false thinking. We all know our liability to make mistakes. The lecturer seems to think that all thinking is equally good, that all thinking is equally comprehensive, and that all thinking is equally an act of good faith. He does not discriminate. He certainly overlooks the continually demonstrated *limitations* of thinking. Besides, there are regions in which thinking has no effect, and is spent utterly in vain. It is, too, limited by temperament, by education, by prejudice, by interest, and even by bodily health. The healthy and honest mind is continually correcting its own conclusions. To-day's decisions are overruled to-morrow, and yesterday's heterodoxies are the orthodoxies of to-day. The "holy torch" of reason does not burn with constant luminousness, and the "thinker" is not equally alert and virile. I venture to believe that the most careful thinkers are the least disposed to claim completeness for their thinking. At any moment the mind may receive access of strength, which may amount to inspiration, and at any moment events may arise which may shake the least suspected conclusions. Experience always leads to modesty when wisely used. It never leads to boastful confidence, or to self-idolatry. It has been too often rebuked to claim infallibility, and too often humiliated to set up a primacy that may not be challenged; and at this time of day, when flippant words are received with "laughter," and "loud laughter," and "renewed laughter," and "roars of laughter," it hides its head, and is ashamed of the jaunty sciolism and wanton impertinence which can awaken the merriment of a mob.

The "holy torch"! But the lecturer must prove, what he never can do, that human progress is lighted by a "torch" alone. *There may be two great lights, as in nature—the one to rule the*

day, and the other to rule the night. Nature has indeed many lights and yet only one ; so the human mind may have the ray of instinct, the lamp of reason, and the torch of fancy, yet these may be, and to the Christian *are*, but the broken lights of the one glory of divine revelation. The Christian does not undervalue Reason, for he knows that without it he would not be a man. Jesus Christ never blamed men for exercising their reason. It is a calumny against Him to say that He did. He often said, "How is it that ye do not understand?" "Ye fools, ye can discern the face of the sky, how is it that ye cannot discern the signs of the times?" He ordered the scribes to read their scrolls again with a clearer eye, that they might see the deepest meaning of their pregnant words. He told men to think, to inquire, to understand, and when men gave wise answers to great questions he saw in those answers the evidence and the blessing of a divine revelation. The "holy torch"! Verily holy! Truly the very gift of God! But take care lest we make it but an evil-smelling lamp. Reason has its special inspirations. Even Reason is able to find its way into the solar regions of fancy and poetry. She has her "fine frenzy" as well as her cold logic. She has her dream by which she turns the night into a longer and brighter day. • In the high moods of sacred passion, when she creates new heavens and a new earth, when she finds "sermons in stones, books in the running brooks, and good in everything," she may startle the mean life that never felt the thrill of an infinite touch, but she is still within the right of the charter by which her liberties are secured. Men are never "damned" for following the light of the "holy torch." They are often misled by mistaking the part for the whole ; they are often dazed by cross lights which gleam over the bogs and swamps of life ; they sometimes lose light by omitting to shake the "torch" ; and, alas ! they often allow the heavenly flame to be obscured and extinguished by the lowest

passions and the unworthiest prejudices. Jesus Christ recognised all these facts, and founded a special appeal upon *them*, warning men that their understanding might become darkened, and adding the ever-suggestive and profound reflection, "If *the* light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

II.

The lecturer next says (p. 12): "We have a Christian system, and that system is founded upon what they are pleased to call the *New Testament*. Who wrote the New Testament? I don't know. Who does know? Nobody!" This remark elicited from the audience "laughter and applause." The lecturer could only have made the flippant and absurd remark in entire ignorance of the facts of the case. The New Testament does not shrink from the severest tests that can be employed by historical criticism. Everywhere its tone is: "This thing was not done in a corner." Nowhere does it ask for itself immunity from criticism; nowhere does it say that it must not be treated as other books are treated. Do let us have decency enough to be simply just in this matter. Every important question connected with the historical genuineness of the Scriptural books has been answered over and over again by competent scholars. Every minister will be able to direct the attention of inquirers to books bearing expressly upon such points, and books not written by sectarian theologians, but by the first scholars of every age and the most reputable men in the highest classes of society. It must not be supposed that the Biblical books have been accepted by scholars without one word of inquiry as to their authorship and validity. Every test has been applied; a broad and hard road has been made and trodden by scholarship from end to end of the sacred books, and the result of the process is that to-day we have a book which we "are pleased to call the *New Testament*," and that book stands in a security

which no assault has been able to violate. He must be a very wise man, or a very foolish one, who undertakes to set himself against the whole learning of the centuries, and to dismiss in one flippant sentence the conclusions of every branch of the Christian Church. Before accepting the opinion of such a lecturer on such a subject, I should have to ask, Who is he? What is his learning? What place does he occupy in the estimation of scholars? What contributions has he made to the criticism of his age? In the absence of positive information upon these points, I do not hesitate to say that flippancy is not a proof of erudition, nor is sneering likely to be the evidence of profound earnestness. It must always be remembered that it is easier to pull down than to build up, and easier to ask questions than to give replies. Were I to say, "Who built the Pyramids? I defy you to produce evidence that the alleged builders ever lived, or ever saw the buildings!" I would in that short denial throw upon you a burden of proof which it would cost you great labour to bear. I know you could bear it. Yet in establishing the evidence you would have to go back into dim antiquity, decipher ancient scrolls or inscriptions, fill your pages with unfamiliar names, and carry out processes of elucidation and argument which would produce impatience in the doubter, and easily provoke him to incredulous taunting or flippant retort. Yet as the Pyramids stand on lasting foundations, so what we "are pleased to call the New Testament" stands to-day as firmly as ever in the literature of civilisation, more widely known than any other book as to the languages into which it has been translated, and enlisting in its advocacy men of the most varied gifts and the most undoubted intellectual and moral probity. The New Testament must prove its inspiration by the *results* of its teaching. To antiquity and signature I attach no small importance; but I could not accept *any book ten thousand ages old*, and signed by all the apostles

that ever lived, if the book itself did not bring with it the force that can move me by the grandeur of its moral tone and the beneficence which it demanded as the proof of my personal belief. Do not suppose that Christians accept a book which "they are pleased to call the New Testament," simply because they have been told to do so by a tyrant or a hireling. They have read the book with critical care ; they have considered the force and value of every assault made upon it ; they have tested its teachings under all possible circumstances ; and as the *result* of the most penetrating criticism and the most complete practical experience, they are not only "pleased to call it the New Testament," but to risk upon obedience to its spirit and law all that is most important in conduct, and all that is most solemn in destiny.

Having thus sneered at the New Testament, I am not surprised to find that the lecturer wishes to make out that the four Evangelists do not agree with one another as to the way of salvation. He thinks that Matthew is practical, and John is metaphysical ; that Mark has been perverted by interpolation, and that Luke is about as practical as Matthew. When the Evangelists give practical precepts he agrees with them, but when they speak of the new birth and faith he differs from them. He takes what he pleases and leaves what he dislikes. When the lecturer agrees with them he regards the Evangelists as wise men ; when he differs from them he either questions their wisdom or supposes that others have added what is untrue or disagreeable. Now my contention is that the testimony of the Evangelists as to the way of salvation is unanimous, and that the variety of expression which is found in their writings is a proof of their unanimity. Consider the position in which the lecturer's theory would place the compilers of the four Gospels. According to that theory the four Gospels are inconsistent with each other ; *in fact*, they flatly contradict one another as to the

vital matter of salvation. Yet for many centuries those self-contradictory Gospels have been regarded as one and the same testimony; they have been published in the same book; the learned compilers did not see what fools they were making of themselves by bringing together statements which are directly antagonistic. From century to century they have issued the four mutually contradictory testimonies; and it was never seen so clearly how they had committed themselves, until one Sunday afternoon it was pointed out in the city of Chicago, amid "laughter," "loud laughter," "renewed laughter," and "roars of laughter," that Matthew had been saying one thing and John another! It is very curious that this inconsistency had never struck Christian scholars, critics, historians, and expositors, and that it should have been left to a man in the nineteenth century to point out the folly and indecency of allowing four men, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, to tell a story in four different and irreconcilable ways. It is true that startling things do happen in the development of human progress, and therefore it is, perhaps, possible that Chicago may be the new Jerusalem, and this eloquent lecturer the true prophet of humanity. But, first, let us examine what he points out as contradictions. Quoting the expression, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," he exclaims, "Good!" So, also, after the expressions, "Blessed are the merciful," "Blessed are the pure in heart," and the like. The lecturer likes the Beatitudes. He endorses them. But when John says, "Ye must be born again," he flies off, and talks about contradiction, interpolation, and the glosses of the Church. It strikes me, on the other hand, that the sentiments belong to one another—that they stand in the relation of cause and effect, and that apart from the possibility of the New Birth, the reference to mercy and purity would be but an *exasperation* of every helpless heart. Why are not *all* men poor in

spirit? Why are not *all* men merciful? Why are not *all* men pure in heart? The very fact that some are and some are not is the most suggestive circumstance in moral history. Suppose a case which the lecturer would admit to be possible. Suppose that a man of impure heart became pure; there could be no doubt about the change. It struck every one who had known the man most intimately. His whole tone was changed, and his whole nature lifted up to a new level. *Something* must have happened. That undefined *something* must have been of a most powerful nature. What was it? Christians would not hesitate to say that the man had been *born again*, and they would point for proof, not to a variable and disputable sentiment, but to an evident and gracious fact. No other explanation would cover the *whole* case. Here is not a mere change of opinion or even of mechanical habit. Here is a totally new conception of life, a wholly new relation to life, and an absolutely new heart and purpose; and to call such a change a *new birth* would seem to me to be not the language of rhapsody, but the simplest statement of a fact. Or, again, the lecturer is much pleased with the idea of social forgiveness as the basis of religious pardon; he says, on p. 21: "If you will forgive men that trespass against you, God will forgive your trespasses against Him; I accept, and I will never ask any God to treat me better than I treat my fellow-men." But why are not *all* men forgiving? Why are there any unforgiving men? Why should it be difficult for any man to forgive? If human nature is so good, so sweet, so incorruptible, how does it come that we should do things that need to be forgiven, or that, having done them, we should find it almost impossible to obtain forgiveness? That secret ought to be explained. It is a mystery of a most painful nature. But suppose that an unforgiving disposition has been made clement and placable, most gentle and gracious—and that such a change is possible we all gladly

acknowledge—it would be fair to ask, What is the *cause* of all this? What wonderful cause has been at work? And if it should be said that the man has been born again, that he is a new creature, that he is regenerated, this would not be the language of fantasy; it would be, as in the former case, the severest and most literal explanation of a *fact*. In Matthew we have the *effect*, in John the *cause*; or in Matthew we have the *miracle*, and in John the *explanation*. If a wise teacher said in one discourse, “Blessed are the industrious, for they shall reap the reward of their labour,” and said in another, “Except an idle man be born again, he cannot enjoy the stimulus or the prize of labour,” he would not contradict himself. In the one case he would present the outward, and in the other the inward aspect of the case, and his clear meaning would be that idleness is so inveterate and so ruinous, that nothing short of a vitally new conception of life and industry would destroy the plague.

Illustrating his position upon this point, the lecturer cites the case of the young man who inquired of Jesus what he should do that he might have eternal life. And he points out that Jesus said nothing to him about being born again. The lecturer’s words are these (p. 26): “He did not say to him, You must believe in me that I am the only-begotten Son of the living God. He did not say, You must be born again. He told the young man to keep the commandments.” But is it true that Jesus said nothing about belief in Himself, and that He said nothing about the new birth? So differently are we constituted, that where the lecturer sees nothing about regeneration or faith, I myself fail to see anything else. Jesus spoke a new word to him, but the young man did not believe. Jesus called him to a new valuation of property and duty, but the young man did not accept the terms. Jesus knew the young man’s weakness, and addressed Himself to it, but the young man did not respond. Nothing about *belief* when you are

asked to accept a doctrine which would revolutionise your whole life! Nothing about the *new birth* when you are called to a sacrifice from which the old nature recoils! It is monstrous to deny that the words of Christ are absolutely inexplicable except on the one ground of faith in Himself, and the realisation of a new birth of the heart. It would seem as if the lecturer did not know a truth except in the same form of words. This is the more remarkable in a man who is unquestionably endowed with fine fancy, both of thought and speech. Yet there is the glaring defect. He actually says in so many words that neither faith nor the new birth had any place in the answer of Jesus Christ to the inquiring young man! Now, let it be supposed that the young man had done exactly what Christ named (what the lecturer calls an interpolation) as the condition of entering into eternal life: he sold all that he had and gave it to the poor. The whole basis of his life was changed. Now ask the young man how he came to adopt a course so revolutionary? He could have but one answer to the inquiry, and that answer would be: "I asked Jesus Christ the conditions of entering into life eternal. He told me, and I *believed* Him, and as I believed Him, I *acted* upon His word; my *faith* enabled me to make the *sacrifice*; but for faith I never could have made it, and, having made it, my life is a new life. I have been born again; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God." That answer is rational, philosophical, and profound; so much so, that any other answer as compared with it would be superficial, inadequate, and self-refuting. As a matter of fact, the young man did *not* believe Jesus. He tried to live *mechanically* rather than spiritually; he did not enter into the tragedy and the after-joy of self-sacrifice, so he passed away as one who did *not believe*, and therefore could not *act*.

It is important to notice this distinction here, because the

lecturer lays it down expressly that belief is not important, but actions are. He says, on p. 71 : " Judge by deed, not by creed." I can but express my amazement that such a man should have committed himself to such a sophism. It is evident that he totally misconceives the full meaning of the word " belief." He clearly confines it to the narrowest and shallowest of its possible significations. I contend, in direct opposition to his theory, that action is the *practical expression* of belief, and that action which is not founded on faith is a trick, an experiment, a mere venture, and is to be avoided as an affront to all that is profound and beneficent in philosophy. To believe is to by-live, to live by. To divorce belief and action is to set up a false and dangerous theory of life. This is the very essence of hypocrisy. To unite as if in happy and sacred wedlock faith and action is the very purpose of Christ. He insists upon having truth in the inward parts, and protests with many a woe and many a curse against those who say, and do not ; who say Lord, Lord ! but obey not ; who try to make the fruit acceptable without making the tree itself good, and who wash the outside of the cup and platter, but leave the inside full of rottenness and dead men's bones. If any man says he believes Christ and does not obey Christ's words, that man is a liar, and the truth is not in him. " Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my mother and sister and brother." No man *does* believe Christ who denies Him in action. He may *say* he believes Him ; he may *pretend* to believe Him ; but by his *fruits* he shall be known, and the greatness of his un-faithful profession shall aggravate the sorrow of his damnation.

The lecturer says that there is not a word about believing anything in the Gospel according to Matthew. In that Gospel it is charity or self-denial that is set forth, and not the Gospel *of belief*. That is a very remarkable statement for the lecturer *to have made*. But is it true that Matthew did not say a word

about belief? On the contrary, the Gospel of Matthew is, so to say, saturated with this doctrine of faith. "When Jesus heard it He marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matthew viii. 10). Is this the kind of teacher that would be likely to undervalue faith? When the woman was healed (Matthew ix. 22), Jesus said: "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew xi. 28). Would they come to a man in whom they did not believe? Why did not Jesus do many mighty works in His own country? Matthew tells us: "And He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." When Peter sank in the water, Jesus caught him and said unto him: "O thou of little faith" (ch. xiv. 31). When the Syrophenician woman importuned Him He answered: "O woman! great is thy faith" (ch. xv. 28). When the disciples could not heal the lunatic, He told them the reason: "Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew xvii. 20). And, in an earlier instance still, Jesus said to the two blind men: "Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you." Yet the lecturer tells us that there is not one word in the Gospel of Matthew about believing! In the eighteenth chapter of that Gospel Jesus speaks about "these little ones that believe in me." Where, then, is the lecturer's authority for saying that there is not a word about "believing" in the Gospel according to Matthew? And the believing was distinctly connected with "salvation" in every instance. The argument

indeed is *a fortiori*, for if believing was necessary to the salvation of the body, how much more for the salvation of the soul? In view of such remarkable instances of the value attached to faith in the Gospel according to Matthew, I cannot see how the lecturer can have said that in that Gospel there is not a word which connects salvation with faith. Faith is the explanation of every action; Faith is singled out as the one reason for every beneficent miracle; Faith is applauded and honoured as the highest exercise of the human mind. And in the Gospel of Matthew is laid down the doctrine that to Faith nothing is impossible.

The fact is that just as the lecturer has given too narrow a definition of *faith*, so he has given too narrow a meaning to the term *salvation*. He treats that term as if it related merely to the attainment of some kind of *heaven*. He debases it until the principal meaning is a sort of pious care-taking or religious selfishness. I am afraid that some theologians have often treated the term in the same unworthy sense. Now, to my mind, FAITH is the deepest, widest, noblest expression of the exercise of the intellectual and moral nature of man, and SALVATION is the complete emancipation of that nature from everything that can enslave and debase it. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "If ye know the truth, the truth shall make you free." By salvation do not understand a narrow escape from hell and a very doubtful hope of heaven. Understand by being *saved* that you are saved from sin, saved from guilt, saved from error, saved from bondage, saved from selfishness, saved from fear, saved from every danger that can imperil your character or ruin your destiny. Without faith such salvation is impossible. Faith is the bond of union between the human and the divine; Faith is the realising and appropriating faculty; Faith is reason in its highest action. As *Christianity* founds itself on literal history, building its house upon

the granite of indisputable facts, and builds until the pinnacles of the royal structure pierce the clouds and enter a light above the brightness of the sun, so Faith builds on intelligence ; Faith honours Reason ; Faith accepts the severest verdicts of honest criticism ; and having done this, Faith enters a higher region, and finds there not a shelter merely, but a sanctuary and a home. Where Reason halts, Faith goes forward. Reason confines itself to agriculture ; Faith pursues the higher study of astronomy. And yet without astronomy even agriculture is impossible. Every daisy that grows is a product of the solar system. The meanest weed in the garden is a child of the sun. As agriculture is indebted to astronomy, so Reason is indebted to Faith. Without Faith, Reason would lose its noblest ambition ; without Faith civilisation would lose its impetus, and give up the battle as one not worth fighting, for the winner loses and the victor dies.

So I do not limit Faith to the acceptance of a few theological propositions. To me Faith is not a clever trick in religious metaphysics ; nor is it some faculty on which priestism plays its tyrannous and selfish pranks. It is not a transient mood in the conjugation of life's throbbing verb which theologians have created for their own uses. What Faith may be to others, I know not. They may have stripped it, and wounded it, and left it half dead ; or they may have cruelly murdered it, and buried the noblest portion under altars that would crumble at the touch of Reason ; or they may have cut away the tokens of its strength, put out its eyes, and set it to turn the millstones of sectarianism and bigotry ! I know not to what base uses it may have been put ; but to me, Faith is Reason glorified ; Faith is the sublimest action of the soul ; Faith is the key that opens the gate of all great kingdoms and enduring empires ; Faith is inspiration ; Faith is the very life of the soul ; Faith is the hand that lays hold on God. And its human side is as beautiful as its

divine aspect ; it moves the heart to grand philanthropies ; its kind eyes are evermore lighted with their truest tenderness when they look on sin and misery, helplessness and despair. True faith drives out selfishness ; true faith stirs to sacrificial action ; true faith sees in every man the image of God. Faith without works is dead, being alone. Works come after faith, as the effect comes after the cause. Where there are no works there is no faith, "for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

III.

The lecturer lays particular stress upon the non-importance of belief, and yet in this very lecture he actually lays down his own creed, upon which he sets the highest value! He says: "I believe in the gospel of cheerfulness" (p. 72); "I believe in the gospel of good health;" "I believe in the gospel of good living;" "I believe in the gospel of good clothes;" "I believe in the gospel of good houses;" "I believe in the gospel of education" (p. 73); "I believe in the gospel of liberty;" "I believe in the gospel of intelligence;" "I believe in the great gospel of generosity" (p. 75). All these "I believes," coming from a man who despises belief, is somewhat remarkable. The fact is, he does not in reality despise belief, he only trifles with the word in its religious bearings. He knows perfectly well that belief is the very basis of society and civilization, and that we could not live one day without it. This clearly shows that the lecturer attaches a narrow and not complete meaning to the word "belief." He will persist in confining it to some merely metaphysical use, and against this perversion the Christian teacher is bound to protest. Again and again we must reiterate the all-important truth, that a man only really believes with his whole heart what he practises; or if he practises other than he believes, he is a pretender and a hypocrite. We are not saved by our metaphysical penetration, or by our penetration into metaphysical subtleties. Belief is action in thought, life is belief in action. Confusion upon this vital point can alone account for the blundering comments which

the lecturer makes upon a passage in the Gospel of Mark : " Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. " " He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned. " Upon this commandment the lecturer says : " There is not one particle of sense in it. Why ? No man can control his belief " (p. 35). Now that which appears to the lecturer so monstrous, appears to me to be the very basis and philosophy of life. So differently do men view the same thing ! Everywhere throughout the world belief is salvation, and unbelief is damnation : of course I use the word belief in the large signification already explained. It is not merely metaphysical act, nor is it an act in solely metaphysical subjects. It is the soul's supreme conviction, and by it the soul must evermore stand or fall. If it is a right belief the soul will be saved, if it is a wrong belief the soul will be damned. This is so in its degree and according to the measure of its importance in chemistry, in navigation, in trade, in enterprise, in practical speculation and investment—in short, in every inquiry and action. Observe what it is that Christ calls upon men to believe ; it is something that renews the life and purifies all its impulses, that ennobles and inspires its motives, that moulds its whole tone and expression ; it is not a series of metaphysical propositions, it is not a set of terms which only trained and singular intellects can even pretend remotely to understand, it is a doctrine of life and moral revolution, interior regeneration and outward philanthropy ; and in view of such results no other terms can so graphically and even mercifully depict the profound reality of the course. Within shorter lines it may be said, Whosoever believeth in *industry* shall be saved, and whosoever believeth not shall be damned. So also with uprightness, punctuality, capability, and every attribute and function of life ; the *positive* means to be saved, and the negative to be damned or lost. *You cannot evade* the consequences of false thinking in

any department of life. They are not confined to religion. They pursue a man in every line and form of life, and Christ gave that literal doctrine only its last and highest application when He said, "Whosoever believeth shall be saved, and whosoever believeth not shall be damned." There is no *threat* in the words; they do but reveal a fact. You do not threaten your child when you tell him that fire will burn him, but when you make known that fact to him you are considerate and gentle. It is precisely so with *every* true gospel. It carries with it, not as mere reward or punishment in any arbitrary sense, but as a philosophical and moral necessity, salvation and damnation. It is true that the lecturer has arranged what he will do in the event of ultimate facts disproving his theory of life. He has told us that he will "walk up like a man and say that he was mistaken." The captain has honestly mistaken the ship's course; he has claimed "absolute intellectual freedom," and in the exercise of it he has driven the ship upon the rocks, and when the sea encroaches upon her, and the great wind strikes her with infinite fury, and the lightning gleams above her masts like a reproachful and penal spirit, he will "walk up like a man and say he was mistaken." Will that satisfy the owners of the vessel? Will that console the shipwrecked travellers? Will that be considered a noble loyalty to the spirit of freethought? I ask these questions to show you that *all* thinking is attended by consequences according to its quality, that not in *moral* gospels only does belief end in salvation, and unbelief in ruin. *Euclid* might have said, after every proposition, he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned. The doctrine is as true in geometry as in morals. Absolute intellectual freedom is unknown to *Euclid*, and he who would claim it in that region would be proclaimed by *Euclid* to be a maniac, and the stern geometer would wisely say, "He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned."

But the lecturer may take refuge in his view of inspiration, and may thus suppose himself to be enabled to set the elements of geometry against the writings of the four Evangelists. He can make a theory of his own in the one case, but he cannot in the other. On page 12 the lecturer says: "We have found some fifty-two manuscripts containing portions of the New Testament. Some of these manuscripts leave out five or six books—many of them; others more, others less. No two of these manuscripts agree. Nobody knows who wrote the manuscripts. They are all written in Greek; the disciples of Christ only knew Hebrew. Nobody ever saw, so far as we know, one of the original Hebrew manuscripts. Nobody ever saw anybody who had seen anybody who had heard of anybody that had ever seen one of the original Hebrew manuscripts." Now there is hardly a sentence in this flippant indictment that is historically correct. It may suit the lecturer to represent the whole Christian Church as composed of knaves and fools, but the Christian Church does not go to the lecturer for a letter of introduction to the world. He has overreached himself in this eloquent ignorance, and injured the cause in whose interests he appeared. Believe me, all Christians are not fools. Some of them can both read and write, and even do a little arithmetic. Some of them can even spell out the meaning of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. How far the lecturer is scholastically qualified to sneer at them I do not know. But, however profound a Hebraist he may be, however complete a classic he may have shown himself, there are really a few scholars, at least as competent as himself, who have come to absolutely contrary conclusions to his own. But it is not needful in a lecture addressed to the general public to discuss this matter on grounds that could be appreciated only by a select few. The answer can be made clear to every ordinary mind. Let us take the case exactly as the lecturer puts it, and I will show you that he actually enlarges and strengthens the argu-

ment for inspiration. He seems to be struck with the fact that Christ wrote nothing, and that He gave no commandment to His followers to write. He sees confusion in the pretended manuscripts. He denies every signature. He rejects what he does not like, and amid "laughter," "loud laughter," "renewed laughter," and "roars of laughter," he picks out what he pleases and attaches to it the blessing or the stigma of his approbation. Now, whenever and by whomsoever written, the New Testament is actually in our hands. Here it is to speak for itself. The greater its blunders the worse for the book; a book that comes with a halting story and a lame appeal will soon bring upon itself the contempt of the world. Now what does the book offer to do? It offers to regenerate the moral condition of mankind. What is its moral tone? It is a tone of uprightness, purity, nobleness, and charity and goodwill. Such a book, written under *such* circumstances, and issuing in and from such an *age*, has to be accounted for. Instead of magnifying the *miracles*, as all other sacred books do for their particular religion, it keeps them expressly in the background, or makes as little of them as possible. On the other hand, it makes a matter of life or death of its morality. It does not trumpet a miracle, it preaches a gospel. It does not excite curiosity or gratify wonder, it comes to seek and to save that which was lost. Here is the supreme difficulty of the sceptic. It appears to me that men who were not divinely inspired would have taken a course directly opposite to that pursued by the writers or compilers of the New Testament. They would have remembered the *miracles* and forgotten the *Beatitudes*. They would have enlarged the *magic* and kept back the morality; they would have multiplied the *signs* and forgotten the *prayers*. But instead of that, what is their course? They report the Sermon on the Mount; they record the quietest and deepest sentences ever uttered by Christ; they write down

with all eagerness and love His tender prayers; with resolute eloquence they urge upon a people who hated it, the revolutionary and beneficent *morality* of their Master. They reject the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; they bitterly curse the devourers of widows' houses. They assail with thunder and lightning the credulity and debasement of official guides; they keep the miracles in the background, and urge with vehement earnestness the morality, which is itself the sublimest miracle, upon the averted and hostile mind of their age. Steadily remember that the age was not sympathetically disposed towards the Christian morality. The age had slain the Moralist and vowed the extermination of the morality and its infatuated teachers, yet the story, according to the lecturer himself, was written in scraps; it passed from mouth to mouth, it was whispered from ear to ear, it underwent all the risks of tradition, it had no scholars to give it literary brilliance, it was simply held by the love and prayer of a small and despicable company; yet as the decades came and went, as jubilees culminated and vanished, as centuries rose and fell, the sacred morality was preserved, and sensationalism was subordinated to righteousness, the Sermon on the Mount towered above the miracles, and amid the tumult and fury of the ages one sweet voice was heard, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Not, I will show you another miracle, but "I will give you rest;" not "I will delight you with new wonders," but "I will give you rest." The very blessing the heart has ever needed—not the Jewish heart only, but the heart of man in every land and in every weary age. The sceptic has to account for that miracle; when he has burned the manuscripts the morality remains, when he has confused the plebeian witnesses upon technical points they still hold up the *doctrine* as the eloquence which was exemplified in life and sanctified in death.

I acknowledge that this proof of inspiration has infinitely greater weight with me than any inspiration which could only point to mechanical preservation, could have. If Christ, to modernise the instance, had been attended by a shorthand writer who scrupulously preserved every word He uttered ; if the notes had been read over at night and signed by Christ and the disciples ; if the manuscript had been handed to a custodian sworn to faithfulness and paid in proportion to his responsibilities, I might have suspected the elaborate and costly mechanism : it would have harmonized with nothing that I know in nature, and nothing I have admired in history ; the seal of life would have been absent, the trust of fearlessness would not have animated a single sentence. The whole would have been too dainty for common use, and about the whole there would have been, to my mind, an air of unreality which would have destroyed its influence. Let me put to you an analogous case, and take your opinion upon it. Here are two lives, both of which I wish you to account for. The one life has been most lovingly cared for by every one interested in it ; its home has been beautiful, its education has been thorough, every want has been anticipated and satisfied. The years have run round smoothly. No pinch of poverty has ever been felt. No rude collisions have ever interrupted its progress through sunny scenes. It has not been so with the other life. That life was born in poverty and cradled in desolation. No warm kiss blessed its infancy. No downy pillow gave welcome to its head ; yet it grew in strength. Added years were added troubles. It was driven forth to other lands. On every sea the storms encountered it. In every land difficulties awaited it. Hunger and cold, loneliness and hardship have been its constant companions, yet that life never sacrificed its noblest instincts and never quenched its lamp of hope. Now let me say that *one* of these lives has been miraculously or providentially preserved, and I ask you which of them. You do not hesitate to reply :

the circumstances are their own answer. You have no wonder about the one case, and you have nothing but wonder about the other. It is even so, in my mind, about two books which might have been preserved in two different ways. I find the parallel of the second life in the history of the New Testament. That history is its own argument, and is complete enough to need no other vindication. Without literary art, without mechanical coherence, without official patronage, abandoned, scorned, denounced, and spat upon by one set ; chained, prohibited, and officially dealt out in safe portions by another, there it is to-day the noblest of moral teachers, the most sympathising of friends, the most hopeful of prophets. It has subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword ; it has had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings—yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments ; it has been stoned and sawn asunder, it has wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth, and this day it is before us in all the known languages of the globe, calling men to repentance, offering pardon to sinners, rebuking all iniquity, a tongue for the dumb and eyes for the blind, the corner-stone of every humane institution, the defence of every noble cause, the fear of tyrants, and the hope of the oppressed ; and my contention is that a book with such a history is the witness of its own inspiration and a book with such a spirit ought to be spared the sneers of men who indirectly owe to it all that is good in themselves and all that is freest in the civilization which they enjoy.

But it is the dogmatism which the lecturer dislikes, and assails, the “believe and be saved, the believe not and be damned.” If “absolute intellectual liberty” had been allowed, the lecturer would have been appeased. Now let me show *you that if Christ had allowed such liberty He would have taken*

away His own character and trifled with His age. If He had said less than "believe and be saved, believe not and be damned," He would have fallen out of the very rank to which He has been assigned by all reputable sceptics. *He was bound to say these very words.* If He had not said them expressly they would have been *implied* by the very quality and range of His teaching. They are not something thrust into the argument—they follow it as a necessary sequence. But the lecturer has entirely misrepresented Christ in this matter. Any one reading the lecture without having read the New Testament would have quite a misapprehension of the case. He would suppose that Christ had laid down some totally *unintelligible propositions*, and had told the world that unbelief would be punished by everlasting fire. He would further suppose that Christ ignored intellectual freedom, and treated man as an intellectual slave. The exact contrary is the case. Christ always appealed to the human will. He set before men life and death, and called upon them to make choice. He said to Jerusalem, "I would, but ye would not"—was not that intellectual liberty? He said, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life"—was not that intellectual liberty? He never attempted to force men. But even *He* could not change the *consequence* of wrong thinking and wicked choice. He so far at least upheld the continuity of nature as to keep in force the solemn yet beneficent law: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." He declared that law, He took His immovable stand upon it, and because He took His stand upon the very law which is sanctioned by *nature*, adopted by *legislation*, and commended by *experience*, He is charged with infringing or even destroying the intellectual liberty of the world! There have been attempts to soften the word "damned" and accommodate it to "ears polite." I retain the word exactly as it stands in strong old English. In this connection no other word can take its place. In range

and solemnity of meaning it balances the other word "saved." If you have been thinking of it as a *threat*, I am not surprised that you have been disturbed by the energy of the term. Again, I would remind you that it is not a threat, but a declaration of necessary consequences. "Touch fire and you will be burned," is not a threat, but a warning. "Drink poison and you will be killed," is not severity of statement on your part, but gentleness. If you, *knowing* the consequences of fire and poison, were to select dainty terms, and to speak about those agents in a hesitating tone, and if fire and poison were misused by those who heard you the responsibility of their injuries would unquestionably lie at your door. You ought to have betrayed no uncertainty in your tone. Your *positiveness* should have equalled your *knowledge*: knowing positively, you should have spoken positively, and having so spoken you could with a clear conscience have left those who heard you to exercise what they ignorantly call "absolute intellectual liberty." A man should take away from himself, so far as is possible, the liberty of thinking falsely, and in doing so he would not be making himself a "slave," but actually enlarging and ennobling his freedom. Now, Christ spoke in the matter of belief according to His knowledge. That is precisely what we do ourselves. Ignorance should be modestly uncertain, wisdom should be heroically positive. In matters of little or no moment we may speak mincingly, but in affairs of life and death we should use the language of precision and energy. In this instance it was a question of life and death, and Christ lovingly, as well as positively, warned the ages: "He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned." Nothing more gracious could have summed up such a gospel as He embodied, and such a doctrine as He expounded. I retain the words. They are grandly true. They are equal to the occasion. No seeker of transient popularity would have used them, and

no honest and competent teacher could have kept them back.

The lecturer himself implies the very thing which he so energetically condemns. He approves the *Beatitudes*. He quotes "Blessed are the merciful," "Blessed are the pure in heart," "Blessed are the peacemakers," and after each of them he exclaims "Good!" Now does he not see—he would do so if his insight were equal to his eloquence—that the very *Beatitudes* themselves carry with them an implied malediction? The light and the shadow go together even here. Take the proof: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." What is that but the sunny aspect of the corresponding truth, "Cursed are the *unmerciful*: for they shall not obtain mercy"? If the pure in heart are blessed because they shall see God, it follows that the impure are *not* blessed and that they shall not see that ineffable vision. To describe one class of men as blessed is to imply that the other classes are excluded from the blessing, and it is most noticeable that when Christ pronounces a *blessing* in the strongest terms the lecturer never complains of dogmatism or "slavery"; on the contrary, he exclaims, "Good!" "Good!" "Good!" But when the same gracious Speaker declares the consequences of false thinking, the lecturer complains of "slavery here, and hell hereafter." This is most unequal criticism, and is not likely to win the confidence of well-balanced minds. What if some one in his audience had risen when the lecturer said "Good!" after each beatitude, and said, "It cannot be good because it limits intellectual liberty, and imposes a penalty upon all who differ from the doctrine"? That would have been strictly in harmony with the lecturer's own reasoning, but I think he himself would have pronounced it irrational and mischievous.

The lecturer is reported to have said that "his principal objections to orthodox religion are two—slavery here, and hell hereafter." Now in this argument I have nothing to do with anything but Christ's own words. I have nothing to do with what the lecturer vaguely calls "orthodox religion." That may mean much, or it may mean little, according to the man who uses the expression. I do not undertake either to impeach or to defend any particular sect. I abhor sectarianism. I regard religious bigotry as an unmitigated curse. I have no doubt that creeds of human making, when regarded as other than initial, suggestive, and specially when associated with penalty, have done more harm to Christianity than has ever been done by any form of speculative infidelity. No theological creed has ever received my signature. No man, no church, has any dominion over my faith; my theology is too sublime to be fastened to any form of unchangeable terms, and my faith too transcendent to be chained by propositions which value their form rather than their inspiration. Yet though thus creedless in the sense which is usually attached to that word, I have vital relations to a common faith, which, renouncing all priestcraft, hating all sacerdotal magic, scorning all papal 'dominion, goes straight to Christ Himself, and gives its whole passion, so to say, to Him, saying, with infinite love and ardour—ECCE HOMO! ECCE DEUS! Having this faith in the man Christ Jesus, studying His words night and day, and acquainting myself deeply with the whole purpose of His ministry, I find it to be no "slavery" to follow Him in all His teaching and commands. There is no slavery in love; there is no slavery in remaining where the heart would wish to be. This is my own case. I am not overborne by fear, and I am not even driven to reluctant silence by inexorable logic. I understand Christ by *my heart*; my whole *love* goes out after Him; I find *rest* in His *tender grace*; I find security in His almighty strength; I

regard Him as the Son of Man, the Son of God—God the Son, above all others in intellectual force, in moral heroism, in personal righteousness, and in every attribute of mind and heart—the Priest of humanity, the SAVIOUR of the world.

IV.

What I have said about creeds will enable me to keep to the subject of salvation according to Christ's own testimony, and spare me the trouble of following the lecturer into his criticism upon sectarian theology. With much of that criticism I agree. Men are not saved by churches, creeds, ceremonies, and incantations, as these terms are interpreted by priests. I undertake to teach that men are saved, in the fullest sense, in one way only, and that is by faith in the Son of God. In this matter I know of one book only, and that is the New Testament. By that book, and not by anything else, must this whole controversy stand or fall, so far as I am concerned. What the lecturer stands by I do not know, except it be his own view of things. That view, however, admits of very distinct expression, as, for example, concerning the doctrine of human depravity. Speaking of Evangelical Christians, the lecturer says: "They look upon a little child as a lump of depravity. I look upon it as a bud of humanity, that will, under proper circumstances, blossom into rich and glorious life." An opponent who speaks in this manner is a delightful combatant, for he comes naked into the battle-field, and mistakes a bulrush for a sword. Where in the New Testament is a little child looked upon as "a lump of depravity"? Is it where Christ says, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"? Is it where Christ says, "Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same *is greatest in the kingdom of heaven*"? Is it where Christ

says, "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish"? Is it where Christ says, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven"? I must insist that Christ be represented by His own words, and I cannot respect any opponent who first fancies his argument, then puts it into the mouth of another man, and finally encounters it with tepid ridicule. The lecturer looks upon a little child as a "bud of humanity." What other kind of "bud" could it possibly be? If it is a "bud" at all, it must be "a bud of humanity." There is no poetry in the conception, though the Chicago audience is reported to have received the intelligence with "loud applause." I wonder why the applause was loud? Can anybody conceive why there should have been any applause at all? Some infatuated English speakers mistake the low and muffled stamping of impatient hearers for applause, and stumble into still farther and deeper commonplace under the mistaken encouragement. It must have been so in this very instance. Consider that a man of genius defined a little child as "a bud of humanity," and a great audience answered the revelation by loud applause! The intelligence electrified the sweltering host, for not until that memorable day had they ever dreamed that "some mute inglorious Milton" would open his mouth in poetry more than Shakesperian, and define a baby as "a bud of humanity." It is an emblem from the garden. There is a vernal flavour about the poetic symbol. It smells of the fresh earth. It is tenderly green. It has but to be named, and an audience will receive it with loud applause. But something more is said about the bud. The people punctuated an unfinished sentence with loud applause, and when the re-echoing thunder died, the lecturer added that the bud would "blossom into rich and glorious life under proper cir-

cumstances"! Then it is like all other buds; the east wind may chill it, the insect may consume it, the blight may overpower it, the rain may break it off the parent stem, the untimely frost may shut it up in eternal secrecy. Poor bud! It has to make its way through measles and hooping-cough and teething, and if it come to nothing the lecturer will "walk up like a man" and say that the circumstances were not proper! That was a very happy qualification on the part of the lecturer. It covers all contingencies. You may drive a chariot and six right through the middle of it, and leave plenty of room for all the other chariots that want an open road. Where *are* those proper circumstances? who keeps them? who arranges them? who sells them? Do let us get at them as soon as possible. I may tell you that if you look long enough at the sea you will find yourselves on the other side of the Atlantic, and when you have looked for fifty thousand ages and still find yourselves where you began I "walk up like a man" and tell you that you have not looked *long enough!* It is the same with the "proper circumstances." I want to know why *all* circumstances are not "proper." What made any of them improper? We all began as "buds of humanity," though we were not all received with "loud applause," and having begun as "buds," here we are to-day complaining of "circumstances," and looking as if we had begun as the buds of weeds rather than the buds of flowers. The lecturer tells us that the circumstances have not been "proper," but that is idle mockery; when did the buds *first* get wrong? When did the circumstances *first* go astray? We ought to search into *causes* and not content ourselves with casual remarks upon patent details. What *kind* of circumstances do you want? Not health, for many healthy men are at this moment on the treadmill; not wealth, for many wealthy men are known to be unfit for honest society; not education, for many educated men are plotting the ruin of the simple, and some have undergone penal

servitude for felony. Do not suppose that the crime of any country is wholly due to its invalids, its paupers, and its ignoramuses. Nothing of the kind. Some unhealthy men are noble-minded; some poor men are virtuous; some ignorant persons are upright. On the other hand, some strong men are little better than brutes, some rich men are an offence to morals, some educated men are knaves. No. We must go deeper than "circumstances" if we would treat the matter vitally; empiricism may trade upon "circumstances," and quackery may play its paying game by telling men how "rich and glorious" would be their life if their "circumstances" were only improved, but such men mistake a painted cheek for a healthy heart, and suppose that "a bud of humanity" can be manipulated as easily as the bud of a waxen flower. "Aye, there's the rub!" The bud *lives*! The bud cannot be moulded by hands! The bud must often be left to itself! Whilst adventurers are trying to paint it into life, or to tie it with thread to the stem from which it has fallen, or to warm it into expansion by a lamp of their own lighting, a grand voice, unlike every other, as a sound of many waters, says: "Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good. Marvel not that I say unto you, Ye must be born again." That teacher did not fritter away the time and patience of mankind by sophistical talk about "circumstances." He did not say, "Peace, peace, where there is no peace;" He did not daub the wall with untempered mortar; He did not heal the hurt of the people slightly; He went to the root of the matter, and with a moral insight unequalled, and a moral courage without a parallel, He brought upon Himself the sneers of sciolists by exclaiming, "Marvel not that I say unto you, Ye must be born again."

This is not all that the lecturer has to say upon the subject of human depravity. Having spoken about "buds of humanity" in general, he has something to say to mothers in particular.

On page 77 he says : " I want it so that when a poor woman rocks the cradle, and sings a lullaby to the dimpled darling, that she will not be compelled to believe that ninety-nine chances in a hundred she is raising kindling-wood for hell." Let me own to some impatience under the irritation of this sentimental sophistry. It ignores not only a special theological doctrine ; it ignores, also, the tragedy of facts, and the whole revelation of daily life. Exclude for the moment all that is distinctively *religious* in the case, and tell me whether the mother knows that the "dimpled darling" she is rocking may not one day break her heart ! The "dimpled darling" may turn out to be a housebreaker, a gambler, a drunkard, or a debauchee. He who was at first rocked as a "dimpled darling" may at last be hanged as an incorrigible felon ! From the sloppy talk of this sentimental lecturer one might suppose that we have only to burn the Bible, secularise the churches, and put an end to religious institutions, and then all "dimpled darlings" will be rocked into obedient boys, and into spotless men. If ever man spoke cruelly to man, it would be when the lecturer told the felon's father that if the "circumstances" had been "proper" the child would never have become a felon. That is to charge the father with the ruin of his own child. Many a "dimpled darling," brought up with love and care, well instructed, well protected, has lived to bring down his father's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave ; and to tell that father if the "circumstances" had been "proper" the end would have been different, is to put a dagger into the heart of a dying man, and to redouble the sorrow already intolerable. The one point, however, which I wish you to keep steadily in mind is, that even if the very word Christianity were unknown, and if all men were utter atheists, the mother who rocks her "dimpled darling" would still be unable to guarantee that he would be an honourable man and a comfort to her old age. Hell is not a word which belongs exclusively

to some world unknown. It has its social as well as its religious meaning. The mother may be raising an occupant of the dark and silent cell ; the mother may be raising a suicide ; the mother may be raising a madman ; the mother may be rocking a child who will die on the gallows by the hands of the common hangman. Yet she rocks in hope that it may not be so. In many a meaning sigh she desires better fate for her loved one. But if he should break her heart, or make her old with the age of heart-woe, no deadlier cruelty could be perpetrated than to tell her that if the "circumstances" had been "proper" the end would have been happier : that would be to stab her sleep, to poison her brain, to madden her with self-reproach, and to thrust into the same grave a blasted life and a broken heart.

Christianity takes a very different view of the tragedy. It utters no weak whine about "circumstances." Christianity does not treat life as a series of clever or clumsy tricks. Its grand philosophy includes the whole scheme and outcome of things, and its speech is full of original vitality. It says that man was made in the image and likeness of God ; that to be a man, he must be endowed with freedom of will ; that to be a moral creature, he must be entrusted with the terrible power of disobeying his Creator ; that in the exercise of the functions which made him a man, he lost his first integrity, and his heart went astray from God ; that God still loved him, went out after him, called him home, offered him forgiveness and restoration, redeemed him with unspeakable price, and now surrounds him with all helpful and restorative influences. Yet even God cannot interfere with the moral independence of manhood. The human (such is the mystery) must always have the power of rejecting the divine. In the end every man will be judged according to his works, whether they be good, or whether they be bad. Now, create what mysteries we may about this doc-

trine, and ask what unanswerable questions we may, I hold it to be a deep philosophy, an all-inclusive treatment of the case, and even in a merely intellectual point of view the most complete and heroic attempt to grapple with all the aspects and issues of the appalling situation. Any lecturer who sends you back to mend your "circumstances," actually degrades the human nature which he pretends to exalt. He makes the case contemptibly small. It becomes a trumpery question of social cobbling. He says in effect: Get better food, better houses, better schooling, better clothes, and your "dimpled darling" will become all you could wish, and your "buds of humanity" develop into luscious fruit. It is a mere question of good marketing. Keep the drains pure and the windows open, attend to your personal comfort, remember the old saw, "Early to bed, early to rise," and your "dimpled darlings" will grow up so as to close every prison, tear down every gallows, abolish every penal settlement, and make the earth one big garden. It is a sentimental falsehood. It ignores the mystery of human nature, which is just as great as the mystery of divine revelation. Consider that, I beseech you. The mystery is not in the revelation alone; it is in the *human nature* which it addresses. Any theory which recognises the *mystery* of human nature, by so much recognises its *grandeur*; and any religion that directly addresses that mystery, separates itself by an infinite distance from all the eloquent quackeries that spend their tepid vapour in futile attempts to deal with the mere "circumstances" of human life. But it must not be supposed that Christianity either ignores circumstances or lightly treats them. No other theory of life and hope lays upon them so strong a hand. Christianity discountenances with penal disapprobation all uncleanness, self-indulgence, idleness, thriftlessness, disobedience to natural law, or anything that can defile or degrade *human life*. It is a great reformer as well as a divine re-

deemer, and if any of its professors do not show this by their lives, blame the hypocrisy, but do not blame the doctrine which it scandalously belies.

The lecturer's final word upon this matter was received with "loud applause." Said he: "The honest man, the good, kind, sweet woman, the happy child, has nothing to fear, whether in this world or in the world to come." When he added, "Upon that rock I stand," the audience rewarded him with "immense applause." The applause was a good deal immenser than the rock; indeed, the rock itself is no rock at all, from the point of view which belongs strictly to the freethinker. To the Christian teacher it is a rock, but to the freethinker it is a bog. The lecturer is rather a rhetorician than a logician, for he quietly assumes every word which is in debate, and accepts "immense applause" without a word of protest. The people should have called out "Stop thief!" because the lecturer has employed controversial terms simply as eulogistic epithets. He says "honest" man, "good" woman, and "happy" child. But "honest," "good," and "happy" are terms in the argument. They are indeed the terms on which the argument turns. If some men are honest, it follows that other men are dishonest, and the question immediately arises, *why?* How do men *become* honest? How do women *become* good? If all men were honest, and all women were good, there would be no argument in the case. I protest, therefore, against any man building his argument with Christian stones, and then calling the edifice a freethinker's castle. Honesty is a result, and I must ascertain its *cause*; goodness is an outcome, and I must discover its *origin*. There is, indeed, a quasi-honesty which is but an investment on the part of hypocrisy, and there is a quasi-goodness which is a coating of silver over a body of lead, and there is a quasi-happiness which is due to good spirits and

buoyant health rather than to uprightness and chivalry of soul. My contention is that sterling honesty in motive, thought, and purpose; genuine goodness in every throb of the heart and every service of the hand; vital happiness in the sense of joy and gladness of spirit—are the expressions and proofs of what Christians are neither afraid nor ashamed to call “the new birth.” Do not mistake vulgar bluffness for honesty; do not mistake studied manners for goodness; do not mistake good animal spirits for intelligent joy. Fix the precise meaning of terms, and never use them in a loose and variable sense; and when your opponent steals them, stands upon them, and calls them a rock, know that you are in the hands of a man whose agility requires to be watched.

“Where others toil with philosophic force,
His nimble nonsense takes a shorter course;
Flings at your head conviction by the lump,
And gains remote conclusions at a jump.”

The lecturer has something startling to say upon the exercise of God's forgiveness. He says on p. 74: “I do not believe in forgiveness. If I rob Mr. Smith, and God forgives me, how does that help Smith?” Another instance of the occasional childishness of this strong man; in this instance the childishness is quite pitiable. “If I rob Mr. Smith, and God forgives me, how does that help Smith?” There is no such jaunty transaction in the moral universe; it takes place only on the lecturer's paper, and nowhere else in the great creation. No such doctrine is taught in the New Testament. No such doctrine is taught by the Christian Church. No such doctrine could be tolerated for a moment in society. As I have had to charge the lecturer with too narrow a definition of *faith*, and too narrow a definition of *salvation*, so I have to charge him with too narrow a definition of *forgiveness*. To great words he has attached little

meanings. "If I rob Mr. Smith, and God forgives me, how does that help Smith?" It is a fancy question, and a question poorly fancied. Mr. Smith must be a party to every transaction which concerns himself. In the New Testament forgiveness is based on repentance, forgiveness, and restitution. It is not a sentimental act, it is the last point in a most solemn process. God must not be represented as ever ready to forgive thieves who have tears in their eyes in consequence of having been found out; that is not penitence, it is only cowardly selfishness: the tears must be in the *heart*. The burning shame must scorch the very soul. Confession must be ample, sincere, penitential, and sacrificial, and the restitution must be to the fullest extent of the robber's resources. When a man has done this, he ought to be forgiven by society as he is unquestionably forgiven by God. Mr. Smith is bound to respond magnanimously to such action, or if he fail to do so, I for one would rather be the penitent thief than the unforgiving Mr. Smith, though he held a pew in every church in Christendom, and affronted the heavens with endless prayers. "No forgiveness. Eternal, inexorable, everlasting justice, that is what I believe in, and if it goes hard with me I shall stand by it, and I will stick to my logic, and I will bear it like a man." I have observed that whenever the lecturer is going to do anything "like a man," he invariably runs a risk of playing the fool. In this instance he simply does not know what he is talking about. When a man tells me that he will bear "eternal, inexorable justice," I know at once that his conception of such justice is absolutely absurd. I do not know what the lecturer's power of endurance is, but let me see him after, for six short months, he has been laid in irons, fed on bread and water, denied more than the faintest ray of light, manacled on either hand to a gang of the lowest felons that ever burdened the earth, and let me *then* see how he would treat an offer of forgiveness, and if *then*

he claimed to have laid upon him the undiminished burden of "eternal, inexorable, everlasting justice," he would at least speak with the authority of a brief experience. I know martyrs have suffered, but their example cannot be quoted in this argument because they did not suffer for evil-doing, but because of that sacred conviction which turns even punishment itself into an unfamiliar but healthy joy: "They departed from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name," and it was the *hope* of "eternal, inexorable, everlasting justice" that made them a mystery to their tormentors, and lifted them above the fear of men.

For myself, as a wrong-doer, I deprecate the visitation of "eternal, inexorable, everlasting justice." My punishment would be greater than I could bear. Not only so, if I kept back the confession of my sin, and stifled the cry of penitence, and refrained from making such restitution as was in my power, I would be challenging the very justice which in my heart I was withholding from the very lives I had injured. I would be acting the part of an unjust man, and no unjust man could bear the full pressure of justice, however much he might prate about it amid the "immense applause" of an infatuated assembly. I have no faith in such cheap courage. It is easy to be valiant in the absence of danger, and to tell me what you would do under circumstances which have not yet transpired. Instead of asking for justice, I pray for mercy. The lecturer may account me a coward, and scorn my trembling fear, but reviewing my life, searching my heart, adding my sins, and looking at myself as I really am, I can but utter but one great cry—

"Jesus, Refuge of my soul,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

V.

I have thus accused the lecturer of displaying a moral flippancy out of harmony with the gravity of the subject, and I have accused him of narrowing and perverting the meaning of such terms as "faith," "forgiveness," and "salvation," and in this contraction of such vital terms I have found not a little explanation of his merriment and blundering. Before joining the main line of my reply, and bringing it to a close, I may refer to one or two incidental points of comparatively small importance. For example, in some particulars the American edition of the lecture differs from the English, not in the substance of the doctrine, but in the form of its expression. All the popular interruptions of the lecturer are omitted, and the edition is certified by the author's autograph. Comparing the two editions, there are points enough of literal difference to entitle me to apply to them the argument which the lecturer applies to the Gospels, and to deny that he ever saw a line of the publications which bear his name! The one pamphlet is called "A discourse," the other is called "A lecture." The American edition is declared by the lecturer to be the only authorised and correct one, yet he has not only expressed his pleasure with the English edition, but is receiving a share of the profits of the sale! The profits of the sale of an unauthorised edition! Partially living upon the profits accruing both from the right edition and the wrong one! On the first page of the American edition the publication is called "A lecture," and on the last page it is called "These lectures."

Now which is it? It cannot both be one and several. But the lecturer certainly does think freely about the singular and the plural, as well as about theology; for his English edition is entitled "What must *I* do to be saved?" and the American edition is entitled "What must *we* do to be saved?" What is the inference from all these peddling criticisms—purposely peddling in order to resemble his own. Evidently the inference is that the lecturer never wrote the lecture, never delivered it, never saw it! And as to his receiving a share of the profits of an unauthorised edition, it is simply impossible and incredible. But of course he will remind me that he does not claim to be *inspired*, and that is the difference between him and the Evangelists. But *where* do the Evangelists claim to be inspired? Where does one of them say, "I am inspired, hear me"? That the Evangelists *were* inspired in the deepest and broadest sense of the term, I have no more doubt than I have of my own existence, and because they were inspired in a spiritual and not in a mechanical sense, they were under no necessity to assert in words their personal inspiration. You do not need to hang a label on an educated man to tell society that he has been to school. The label would throw a doubt upon the education. But the lecturer does not claim to be inspired, and that will be his defence against my criticism. Not only, however, is he himself not inspired, but he will not allow the credit of inspiration to anybody else. He writes and speaks as if he had been inspired from all eternity: he says Matthew never saw the Gospel which bears his name; Jesus never told the young man to sell all and give to the poor; Jesus never said, "Ye must be born again;" Jesus never said, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." If literary feats like these can be accomplished *without* inspiration, surely the discrepancies and errors I have pointed out might have *been avoided*. Non-inspiration enables the lecturer to do very

great things, but scorns to enable him to do very little ones.

One of the main charges which I have to urge against the theory of the lecturer is that whilst he is justly severe with many of the perversions which priests and adventurers have gathered around Christian teaching, he does not find "the soul of things good in things evil;" he does not liberate *the spiritual principle* from the degrading bondage into which it has been dragged; he sets fire to the prison and consumes the prisoner. I heartily join the lecturer in many of his censures and condemnations in reference to formal creeds, manufactured orthodoxies, and official pretensions. Christianity has suffered grievously from over-organisation. She has been made to sign too many documents, and to keep too many detectives, and to trust too much to the peculiar utterance of sanctified syllables. The reformer called for to-day is not a man who seeks, happily in vain, to *destroy* Christianity, but to *liberate* the holy genius from the cruel bondage into which it has been driven. Such a reformer is needed. He will suffer much when he comes, but after three days he will rise again and share the very throne of Christ.

To illustrate what I mean by the lecturer's inability to see "the soul of things good in things evil," I may refer to his jocose treatment of the doctrine of apostolic succession. He justly shows it in a most ludicrous light. He points out that it was once unknown in America, but that a gentleman went to Scotland and arranged that the apostolic succession should be taken over to America and continued there. Now, from the lecturer's point of view, such ridicule was well expended. The advocates of mechanical succession expose Christianity to the contempt of healthy minds. Yet I believe in apostolic succession! There is a *principle* in that doctrine which is necessary to the true

interpretation of all human history. Without that principle, indeed, human history would seem to me to lose its continuity and to fall to pieces. The principle is that of affinity, similitude, subtle kinship, and that undefined masonry which establishes the most beneficent and the most durable commonwealths. No man succeeds the apostle Peter who is cold, selfish, calculating, and narrowly prudent. No man succeeds the apostle Paul who is timid, self-protecting, and unenterprising. No son succeeds a generous and heroic father who is selfish and cowardly. He is his son according to the flesh, but in the spirit he was born at the other end of the universe, and is not a stranger only, but an alien and an enemy. The succession in which I believe is not a carnal, but a spiritual continuity. I find it in music, in art, in politics, in literature, and in Christianity. There is an apostolate of art as well as of religious thought, and there are men amongst us who trace their noble pedigree to Raphael, and others who trace their spiritual lineage to the apostle Peter or the apostle Paul. Here, as it seems to me, is the key of the lecturer's position. His strength is in his weakness. He is most witty and humorous in dealing with accidental perversions, but quite unequal to his task when he goes beyond that line. If joking and reasoning were the same thing, the lecturer would be a powerful opponent. For example, the only thing he does with the Athanasian Creed is to laugh at it. In treating that venerable document he made the audience laugh five times, and a sixth time he elicited "loud laughter and applause" (p. 50). Far be it from me to undervalue ridicule as an argumentative arm. I use it. I set special value upon it. I think it indispensable under some circumstances. But it ought not to hide the *truth* that may be overlaid by error. For example, the lecturer makes great fun of George Whitefield and John Wesley, John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards. But a witty man could make fun of his own father

if he were base enough to play the fool's game. I am not here to defend every eccentricity or peculiarity in Whitefield and Wesley, Calvin and Edwards, but I am here to say that they brought upon themselves the scorn and cruelty of their day, they suffered like honest men, and if they did not make people laugh as the lecturer does, they endured sacrifices and penalties beside which his "loud applause" is an anti-climax which shocks the moral sense. But again, I would say, this is the key of the lecturer's position. He is a good laughier. But he is no expositor at all. He laughs at belief because he treats it as a merely intellectual term; he laughs at salvation because he thinks it merely a way of sneaking into heaven; he laughs at forgiveness because he thinks it a cheap form of shaking hands; he never touches the *vitality* of the case; he does not see that faith, salvation, and forgiveness are three of the greatest terms in human speech, and that they should be delivered from the narrow uses to which some ignorant and superstitious men have condemned them. If a lecturer of his gifts would commit himself to the useful task of liberating such words from immoral captivity, and showing mankind of what noble definitions they are capable, he would render lasting service to his age. Less laughter would reward his labours, but the applause would be as the glad and grateful shout of emancipated men.

I have charged the lecturer with giving narrow and inadequate meanings to such terms as Faith, Inspiration, Forgiveness, and Salvation, and I have now to add that his mistake is but the expression of a profounder error still. He has been unjust to the branches only because he has been unjust to the *root*. It appears to me that the fundamental blunder of the lecturer is to be found in his utterly unworthy conception of *LIFE* itself. This is the root of the mischief. The lecturer does not represent life in its *totality*, but in one or two of its most attractive

aspects. This error vitiates the whole of his reasoning. Life is not simple and easy, superficial and manageable, a quantity that can be all seen at once and measured off into inches for particular and final treatment. Given a life that knows no disease, no pain, no sorrow ; a life all health, sunshine, and hope ; a life beginning with birth and finally ending with death ; a life all on the surface and all exposed to scrutiny ; and it will be easy to invent a theory for its culture and reward. But that is not *our* life. Our life has its impenetrable mysteries, its inscrutable motives, its appalling forces of wrong-doing ; it blasphemes and worships ; it defies God and prays to Him ; it is infinite in ambition and mean in purpose ; it is almost an angel, it is nearly a beast ; it never fully discloses itself ; it never speaks its last word ; it never allows the revealing light to fall upon its entire surface, it has no complete definition in words, it can look a lie, it can simulate sincerity, it can laugh on its bended knees, it can transact business in prayer ! Wondrous life ! A glory and a shame ; a great light and an intolerable gloom ; tender enough to love, fierce enough to slay ! Tell me how you are going to treat *such* a life ? Will you feed a tiger with confectionery ? Will you confine behemoth in a vase of scented water ? Will you put a pin through the lightning and fasten it in an appointed place ? Will you exorcise the spirit of madness by rhetorical sentences about kissing the wavelets and bathing in the gilded clouds ? Will you ask *murder* to an evening party, and *licentiousness* to a midnight dance ? What is your scheme ? I do not find a worthy scheme in all this lecturer's eloquent effusion. He treats life as if it were or might be a sunny holiday ending in an eternal night. Life is to him a plain road, to me it is an intricate thicket ; to him a laugh, to me a riddle ; to him a pleasant comedy, to me a tragedy, terrible to look upon. Yesterday a *mistake*, to-morrow a doubt ; every respiration a narrow escape

from death, every birth a speculation, every outgoing an uncertain return, every breath a mystery, and every mystery a pain. To the lecturer life is a happy picnic in summer woods under blossoming hedges, kept merrily to the accompaniment sung by uncaged birds. To me life is a daily discipline, a hope that often ends in disappointment, a problem without an answer, a journey up-hill in the night-time with infinite precipices on either hand. You will not wonder, therefore, if I am not satisfied with jokes that elicited resounding laughter as an answer to the mystery which touches me with subtle fear and the inspiration which charms me with the light of hope.

It would appear that the lecturer would be content with such replies and solaces as "nature" would afford. On p. 79 he says: "But for me, I will leave the dead where nature leaves them." This docile assent to nature is not the characteristic of any wise man's life, and therefore I doubt its application in the last event of death. This poetic adoration of nature is only a dainty arrangement of pretty and pointless words. To adapt and subdue nature is one of the constant purposes of life, and to interpret her mystic symbolism is another. Does the lecturer leave his *garden* where nature leaves it? Does the lecturer leave his *child* where nature leaves it? Does the lecturer leave the *lightning* where nature leaves it? Does the lecturer leave the *rocks* where nature leaves them? Nothing of the kind. Yet he will leave the *dead* where nature leaves them. But even this he *cannot* do if he would. He carries the dead in his heart. He makes them live again in many a twilight talk, and makes their faces glow in many a fond imagining. They do not die. They do but withdraw, and send their daily gospel of loving remembrance; they do but speak in a softer voice; they do but touch with a gentler hand. *Where* does nature leave them? In the cold clay? In the dark, lone, deep pit?

In the out-of-the-way cavern where the night-birds hoot and the cold wind moans the threnody of pitiless despair? Never! It is a wicked lie which hath never forgiveness neither in this world nor in the world to come!

Yet let no man be unjust even to what is known as "nature." I claim for that term a larger signification than that which the lecturer has attached to it. He speaks of the possibility of those he has loved and lost "having become part of the elemental wealth of the world, gurgling in the stream, floating in the clouds, bursting in the foam of light upon the shores of worlds." Truly this man in renouncing one miracle is quite prepared to make a hundred others in its place. Once let his poetic faculty be warmed and there will be no lack of miracles. The Christian idea of the soul going forward into other worlds to complete its destiny, is the tamest commonplace compared with its possible "gurgling in the stream, floating in the clouds, and bursting in the foam of light upon the shores of worlds." All this gurgling, floating, and bursting can be imagined only by those who claim "absolute freedom of thought," and for my part I do not envy their enjoyment of the process. But I must insist upon "nature" having her parable read in a clear and sympathetic tone. To me, *nature is an eternal protest against death*. I should accuse myself of that kind of dishonourable prejudice which sacrifices facts to theories if I saw only the wintry aspect of nature. On the other hand, it seems to me that *life*, not death, is her sovereign law, and that if she could speak articulately to disobedient men she would say—"Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life." As well imagine that it is the function of man to sleep out all his life, and point to his slumber at midnight in proof of the assertion, as suppose that nature points in the direction of death because in *winter she is locally benumbed with cold*. Science finds life

everywhere. The whole movement of nature is in the direction of life. In the sunbeam, in the drop of water, in the speck of dust, you will find life. At this moment your foot is set down upon life. In every breath you draw there may be some throb of life. It may be that some day science will find life in the very heart of the ice. I do not invoke the poet's fancy to create for me any supernatural miracles in this direction. To my astounded and adoring mind nature is full of miracles—yea, she herself is a miracle infinite. So impressed am I with this fact that I hear without doubt that one day "the earth shall cast out her dead," and "death shall be swallowed up in life." This is not the last note of a triumphant hymn, it is the completing-point of an impartial and rigorous science: not theology alone, but biology says, "Thy dead men shall live," "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The Church has long been singing these anthems; science is singing the same hopeful music; instinct and culture have anticipated the same end, and Revelation has comforted and satisfied them with its pathetic disclosures. "Where nature leaves them"—so be it. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." "It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." Kind nature takes the seed, the root, the bulb, to her dear old heart, holds them there for the baptism of dew and light, and in due time they are wheatfields, gardens, forests, and so nature does her best to illustrate the sublime doctrine, "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

Accusing the lecturer, and the whole school to which he belongs, of giving unjust and inadequate definitions of Faith, Salvation, Forgiveness, Inspiration, and Life itself, I have now to affirm that Christ alone seems to me to have brought *all things* within His view and to have given deeper and broader interpre-

tations of human nature, its constitution, functions, necessities, and possibilities, than any other teacher. By so much He has arrested my attention and gained my confidence. Other teachers see *points* very clearly, but Christ takes in the whole *horizon*. Other teachers have suggestions to offer and experiments to propose, but Christ calls for new *life*, new *creation*, new *spirit*, and thus carries the *whole breadth* of human progress before him. Other teachers seem to be more *immediately* effective, here and there, in reform and rearrangement, simply because they address themselves to *symptoms* and not to radical diseases, and simply because an artist can make a flower sooner than nature can grow one. Do not judge by mere speed. The tailor can make a coat sooner than a teacher can develop a character. So we must not be led away by the promise that society can be vitally ameliorated by the improvement of solitary points. Such points are, of course, necessarily included in the programme of Christianity. The lecturer has overlooked this fact, and has done Christianity grievous injustice by talking of happy homes, happy children, intelligence, culture, cleanliness, and friendship, as if it excluded or despised them. On the contrary, they are all embraced within the Christian scheme, but their proportion and perspective are never exaggerated or distorted. It would appear to me that when other reformers go into the house where man is dying, they measure him for a new suit of clothes, they rearrange the chamber furniture, and they sprinkle scented water in the air. All these may be good things. Not a word do I say against them. But when Jesus Christ goes into the room where man is dying, His first concern is to re-establish the ebbing *life*, and having done that, all the rest will follow. It is here that Christ gets His great hold upon my own heart. He does not trifle with me. He tells me that if the fruit is to be good the tree itself must be *made good*. The Scribes and Pharisees and priests give me

tasks in ritual and penance and self-mortification, but Christ says that without a good *heart* there can be no good action, though to a superficial criticism the contrary may seem to be the fact. Moreover, Christ accompanies me through *the whole circle of life*, and is equally strong at every point. Herein I feel how true is the word, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Other teachers go with me *part* of the road, but Christ goes with me to the *end* of the journey. Here and there, just where life becomes agony, other teachers are dumb, but Christ has a gospel for the hour of piercing and burning pain. There are points in life at which all other teachers turn away in fear and dismay, but at those very points Christ enlarges Himself upon my vision, and fills with plentifulness the void of my troubled heart. Other teachers display their strength, Christ shows the uses of weaknesses. Other teachers leave me at the gates of death, Christ goes with me through all the valley and brings me into the morning of immortality. This might be regarded as poetry only but for the tone of moral energy, so grand and strong, that thrills through His whole teaching. When I think, speaking of Him merely as a man, of His intellectual shrewdness, His profound common-sense, His independence of all priestly magic, His heroic courage, and His infinite generosity, and then combine with these His glorious revelation concerning death and immortality, it is no longer poetry, except in the sense that truth is larger than fact, and that without poetry human history is like the earth without the sky. And that is just what freethinking appears to me to be—the earth without a sky! One world only. Yet though the sky be denied, the earth could have no summer without it. We seem to be in one world, yet in reality we may be in many. We keep our *time* by the sun. We navigate our *ships* by the stars. We receive our summer from *above*. The earth is not a lonely prison driven away from the planetary commonwealth into a

solitary position in the great sea of space, it is part of the unmeasured universe, it is warmed by distant fires, it is held in the leash of the sun, and without it, small and mean as is its magnitude, the great creation would be incomplete.

I am not aware that in this reply I have uttered one bitter or ungenerous word. No great cause can be advanced by such language. If here and there in the course of so long a speech I have availed myself of the *argumentum ad hominem*, I have done so in no spirit of sectarianism. In the exercise of such freethought as is possible to me, I have deliberately accepted Christianity as the completest philosophy of human life as well as the grandest conception of religion. That priests have laid their wicked hands upon it, I am too well aware; that it has been cruelly wounded in the house of its friends unhappily admits of no denial; that it has been shut up in sectarian prisons and made the drudge of narrow-minded bigots, is the darkest and saddest fact in history. But I must distinguish between Christianity itself and the mutilated editions of it which have been published by Priestism, Bigotry and Fanaticism. I know of no creature more despicable than the man whose Christianity is destitute of the spirit of Christ. There can be no meaner wretch. He is orthodox in words, but heterodox in actions. He could send men to hell without a tear or a groan. He has patronised a crucifix, but has never died upon a cross. His Christ is an historical name, not a present power. He is a wolf in sheep's clothing. He is a whited sepulchre. He has "stolen the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in." I decline his advocacy. I repudiate every title to consideration which he asserts. And Christ Himself will say to him and to his whole class, "Depart from me, I know you not."

I discriminate also between true men and false men in the *school of freethought*. They are not all free men who call

themselves freethinkers. Even they may be narrow in conception and ungenerous in feeling. There is a cant of denial as well as a cant of profession. There is a popery of agnosticism as well as a popery of superstition. There is a cant of infidelity as certainly as there is a cant of belief. Have no faith in any man who is irreverent, for reverence is the basis of all that is noble and tender in character. Flippancy is an offence to the spirit of the universe as well as to the spirit of religion. It sees no visions, makes no sacrifices, inspires no confidence. Nor imagine that in giving up religion you give up all mystery. To my own mind there is mystery *with* God, and there is nothing but mystery *without* Him. The mystery that is in the Bible corresponds precisely with the mystery I have found in my own heart. It searches me as no other book does, and puts into language the thoughts for which I find no other speech. If some unworthy men have basely abused it, other men have been ennobled by its teaching, and have acquired by that teaching a moral pre-eminence which nothing else could have given them.

I call you to Christ. The more deeply I study His character the more do I see that He is the only Saviour of the world. A working Peasant, a carpenter's Son, a root out of a dry ground, He stands to my mind above all other men in the clearness of His insight, the range of His outlook, the heroism of His courage, and the splendour of His sacrifice. To me He is none other than Emmanuel—"God with us." When I want Him most He is most to me; when the wind is coldest His touch is warmest; when heart and flesh do fail He is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

"On that Rock I stand."

When I feel the burden of my sin most grievously, and quail under its intolerable weight, Christ alone can speak to me the word which recovers my strength and recalls my hope.

On that Rock I stand.

When the world goes hard with me, when bread is scarce,
and friendship cold, and the outlook shut in by blinding snow,
Christ soothes me and nerves me with an infinite comfort.

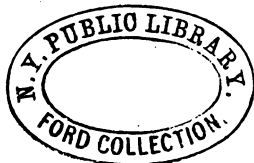
On that Rock I stand.

Standing on that rock I look across the untraversed sea of
futura. I wonder what is beyond. I try to read the apocalypse
of the clouds as they shape themselves in suggestive images on
the far horizon. I look and wonder, I weep and pray, and
amid the tumultuous emotion the black death-ship calls for me
to bear me elsewhere. It is manned by friendly hands. Its
Captain is like unto the Son of man. I soon find that we are
not

“the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.”

Soon the light falls on the ocean waste, soon I see vibrations in
the solemn sky, soon I hear the song of happy voices, and pass-
ing in haste through the yielding waters, I begin to see the
littleness of earth, the brevity of time, the grandeur of life, the
magnificence of eternity, and I, too, lift up my voice in grateful
song.

ON THAT ROCK I STAND!



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